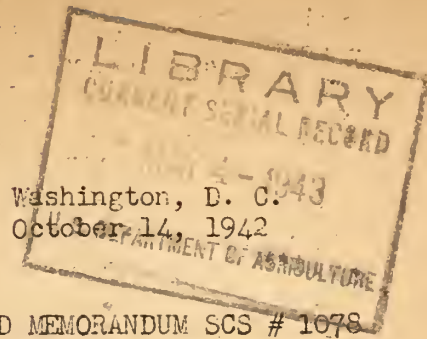


Historic, Archive Document

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

1.96
A-26 PM
p. 1

UNITED STATES
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Soil Conservation Service



FIELD MEMORANDUM SCS # 1078

Re: Widespread Application of
Conservation Practices to
Further Production of
Essential War Products.

TO ALL RANKING FIELD OFFICERS:

Farmers and ranchers were asked to produce unprecedented amounts of food, fibers and oils in 1942 as a part of the all-out war effort. Generally the goals for 1943 will probably be higher than for 1942 and it is almost a certainty that the production pressure will be on farmers and ranchers and on the land they own and operate for the war period plus at least the early years during the post-war adjustment period. Production is demanded in the face of shortages of farm labor, equipment, power; and production supplies and of a decreasing number of experienced agricultural workers to give technical assistance to the farmers and ranchers.

Considerations of this situation by personnel of the Federal Extension Service, the Soil Conservation Service, and Agricultural Adjustment Agency in Washington have been under way for some days. These considerations have led to essential agreement on the need for an organized widespread effort to assist farmers and ranchers to establish conservation practices that will increase or maintain yields of products needed for war (including those from tilled, grazed or forest lands) emphasizing those that can be applied with little or no additional use of farm or ranch labor, equipment, power, and production supplies and with the minimum of technical assistance.

A proposed directive addressed to State and County USDA War Boards is being developed. It is hoped that such a directive would result in all agencies of the Department represented on the USDA War Boards taking an active part in the undertaking. It is recognized that the Service can make its maximum contribution in the wartime production conservation program only when our activities are properly co-related with those of the other Departmental agencies.

However, there seems to be at least the following sound reasons for immediately informing you of our present thinking concerning appropriate Service activities in the organized widespread effort that are essential:

1. Information has reached us concerning discussions of this effort between Service personnel and representatives of AAA and State Extension services at both the Regional and State levels. Since there is no desire on the part of anyone to stifle local initiative or action pending the beginning of the national campaign, Service personnel engaged in these discussions need guidance in determining our course of action.

2. This is the time of year when district governing bodies and Service personnel assigned to assist soil conservation districts give consideration to ways and means of getting the maximum application of planned conservation practices on the farms and ranches of district cooperators and we feel that such joint plans for this "execution season" should be made with full understanding of the possibilities of short period details of personnel to counties or other local areas outside soil conservation districts as well as an appreciation of the valuable contribution to total conservation such an effort will make within soil conservation districts.
3. It is recognized that Zone Technicians, who will have a major responsibility for assisting District Conservationists and work unit personnel with the undertaking at the local level, need as complete information as possible now since their "office weeks" come at four week intervals and the opportunity to guide local participation in one part of their Zone will be gone for a three month period if it is not available during the current "office week".

These reasons for an immediate release of information concerning what we believe to be appropriate activities of the Service were discussed with the Administrator, ACAA, and it was with his concurrence that this memorandum was prepared and is now being released. Further joint considerations by the Departmental agencies in Washington may reveal the need for an additional Service release revising or supplementing the information contained herein.

I. As a result of considerations and discussions in Washington, it is expected that in the very near future a committee will be formed in each State to plan the activities involved in rendering assistance to farmers and ranchers in the widespread application of conservation practices. The State Conservationist is considered to be the appropriate Service representative to participate in this planning at the State level.

II. At the county or other local area level the activities will be determined by the plans of procedure developed in the several States but will probably involve, among others,

1. Holding community or neighborhood meetings of farmers to determine their production-conservation problems and to draw on the local experience of the farmers in developing solutions.
2. Analyzing the results of these meetings.
3. Developing a plan of attack by problem areas. The plan could appropriately include such activities as:
 - a. Identifying land classes in each problem area and writing descriptions in farmer and rancher language.
 - b. Developing "job sheets" for the practices to be emphasized.

- c. Training agricultural workers, farmer committeemen and local leaders in assisting farmers to select the proper combination of practices to use in order to achieve the maximum production with the minimum of soil wastage.
- d. Holding community or neighborhood meetings to discuss production goals for 1943, importance of proper combination of practices to insure needed production, AAA payments, etc.
- e. "Signing up" the farmers to establish needed conservation practices in the proper combinations.
- f. Training agricultural workers, farmer committeemen and local leaders to assist farmers in establishing practices. The training should include "method demonstrations" and suggestions on planning and holding such demonstrations.
- g. Holding "method demonstrations".
- h. Assisting farmers in establishing practices.

III. Emphasis should be given to the widespread application of conservation practices that contribute the most to maintaining or increasing yields and that can be (1) applied with little or no additional use of farm labor, equipment, power and production supplies and (2) furthered with the minimum of technical assistance in each important crop and livestock producing county or other local area in the country. To be effective during the 1943 crop season the period from the end of harvest this fall until crop planting time next spring must be utilized in this undertaking. In range areas comparable seasonal activities must be considered. To the end that SCS makes its maximum contribution during this period the following suggestions are made and where needed administrative authority granted to make effective the carrying out of the suggestions--

1. In Soil conservation districts make the maximum contribution possible in activities such as those outlined as "probable" in "II-1 to 3" above. The desirability of such participation should be fully explained to district governing bodies and should be undertaken with their endorsement and assistance.
2. In soil conservation districts in cooperation with the district governing body and neighborhood leaders (assistant supervisors, etc.) contact each district-farmer cooperator to insure that the following five farmer assistance "needs" are fully met:
 - a. Selecting land to use for cultivated crops*.
 - b. Selecting acres for planting to essential war crops*.
 - c. Determining conservation practices that will increase or maintain yields of products needed for war (including those from tilled, grazed, or forest lands), emphasizing

those that can be applied with little or no additional use of farm labor, equipment, power and production supplies and with the minimum of technical assistance.

- d. Establishing such practices (by providing necessary information, guides, "job sheets", method demonstrations, etc.)
- e. Establishing practices of a more complex type that require additional use of farm labor, equipment, power and production supplies and technical assistance "on site" only when such practices "must" be used to assure desired production and prevent undue soil wastage.

*Acreage on farms where owners or operators are in military service or employed in war industries should not be overlooked.

Authority to employ seasonal aides should be utilized insofar as funds permit to accomplish this.

- 3. In soil conservation districts, with the concurrence of the district governing bodies, restrict technical assistance "on site" to district-farmer cooperators to the "must" practices to be established before the beginning of next crop or grazing season in order that as many cooperators as possible may be served.
- 4. In soil conservation districts, with concurrence of the district governing bodies, prepare any new farm conservation plans for district-farmer cooperation with the emphasis on meeting the five farmer assistance "needs" listed in III-2 above. Upon determination by the district governing body and with minimum requirements fixed by such bodies, the farm conservation plan may include "as agreed" only practices, actions and assistance necessary to meet the five farmer assistance needs listed in III-2 above. Other desirable and necessary conservation practices and treatments to be carried out should be listed in the plan as "agreed" or "recommended" as the case may be. Each farm conservation plan should be complete in accordance with district developed and adopted land use capability classes, practices, and treatments when the "agreed" plus the "recommended" are considered. The Service will recommend to district governing bodies that the applicable actions and practices necessary to meet the five farmer assistance "needs" listed in III-2 above be the minimum requirements for "agreed" as the basis for farmer-district agreements.

The Service policy, as often stated, is to assist farmers and ranchers to prosecute a complete coordinated program of soil and water conservation and sound land use, treating each acre in accordance with its needs and adaptabilities. The procedures suggested above do not in any way change this principle, but on the other hand, further it by making Service assistance available to more farmers and ranchers in a manner which will mean much in meeting their war created production-conservation problems. Every activity of this Service in emergency assistance to farmers can and must contribute to the progressive attainment of long-time Service objectives.

5. In local areas outside soil conservation districts make the maximum contribution possible in activities such as those outlined as "probable" in "II-1 to 3" above. Insofar as possible this contribution should be made by the State Conservationists and their assistants and by District Conservationists and specialists assigned to the District Conservationist's staff. On the request of the State Conservationists and with the approval of the Regional Conservators, Zone Technicians (during special field weeks) and other regional office staff members may be given specific assignments in this undertaking. Work unit personnel (P-2's and below) may be detailed to work in local areas outside districts for short periods to assist in getting the program under way but in light of the congressional limitation on the use of funds for travel such details may need to be limited insofar as practicable to "critical areas" created by agricultural production to meet wartime needs.

My letter of October 5, 1942 to Regional Conservators limits such short period details to not more than a total of ninety days during the period from this date to the beginning of the next crop season for any employee assigned to assisting a soil conservation district. This limitation is placed in consideration of the tremendous job to be done in the 793 soil conservation districts, including approximately 2,000,000 farmers and 460,000,000 acres, created by land owners and operators in recognition of their needs for a broad-gauged attack on their conservation problems.

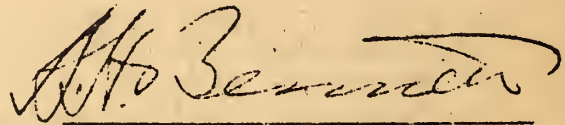
6. In local areas outside soil conservation districts do not attempt to render technical assistance "on site" in establishing the more complex practices requiring major use of farm labor, equipment, power and production supplies.* This limitation is established for the following reasons: (1) limitations on travel funds prohibit the detail of personnel for periods of sufficient length to permit such assistance to be effective widespread if used in "on site" application work, (2) essential surveys and studies to make such practices effective are not generally available and (3) the time that it would be necessary to spend in such efforts is needed in the prosecution of the widespread application of practices that can be applied by farmers and ranchers with little or no additional use of labor, equipment, power and production supplies and with a minimum of technical assistance.

*This limitation does not apply to Extension-SCS demonstration farms, approved SCS operations areas or selected "critical areas" (resulting from the production of war needs).

IV. Personnel details to areas outside soil conservation districts shall be completed prior to or, at the latest, at the beginning of the new crop or grazing season in the Spring. At that time and until harvest is over in the Fall of 1943 farmers and ranchers will be engaged in production activities. During this period SCS personnel assigned to assist districts will be engaged primarily in the preparation of conservation plans for farms, ranches and other units. It is believed that such arrangements as set forth in "III-4" above will permit the preparation of a considerably larger number of plans that are particularly adapted to meeting wartime production-conservation problems.

Towards the end of the cropping season full participation of SCS personnel in soil conservation districts and in "critical areas" outside soil conservation districts (details permissible, if necessary) in any local area activities involving Winter cover crops and the like as a part of the planned widespread application program may be entirely desirable.

The job to be done is big--conservation must offset shortages of farm labor, equipment, power and production supplies if the needed production is to be attained. We must use the technical resources of the Service in this joint effort in the way that will contribute the most to achieving this objective--adequate harvests of all needed foods, fibers and oils in 1943, produced with a minimum of soil wastage in order that equal or greater yields can be made in 1944 and for the duration.



Chief